THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS, MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION (SHRI RAM NAIK): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The National Development Council (NDC), while approving the Approach Paper to the Ninth Five Year Plan (1997-2002) on January, 16, had approved a target growth rate of GDP of 7 per cent per year for the Ninth Plan. Taking into account the actual realisation of 5.0 per cent growth during 1997-98 (i.e., the first year of the Ninth Plan) as per the Quick Estimates and the expected realisation of 5.8 per cent during 1998-99 (i.e., the second year of the Plan) as per the Advance Estimate, the Planning Commission recommended to the NDC a reduction in the target rate of growth of GDP from 7 per cent per year to 6.5 per cent per year average over the five years of the Ninth Plan. The NDC approved this revised target growth rate on 19 February, 1999. Implicit in this target is more than 7 per cent of average growth during the remaining three years of the Plan.

(c) The sectoral implication of the change in the GDP growth rate from 7 per cent per year to 6.5 per cent per year in the Ninth Plan are:

(i) change in the growth rate of value-added in agriculture and allied sector from 4.5 per cent per year to 3.9 per cent per year, while retaining the growth rate of 4.5 per cent in the value of agricultural output.

(ii) change in the growth rate of manufacturing from 9.7 per cent per year to 8.2 per cent per year,

(iii) change in the growth rate of electricity, gas & water supply from 10.6 per cent per year to 9.3 per cent per year.

(iv) change in the growth rate of construction from 5.7 per cent per year to 4.9 per cent per year,

(v) change in the growth rate of trade from 7.1 per cent per year to 6.7 per cent per year,

(vi) change in the growth rate of communications from 112.2 per cent per year to 9.5 per cent per year.

Central Assistance for Surat

*342. SHRI BANGARU LAXMAN: SHRI BRAHMAKUMAR BHATT:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) the reasons for delay in releasing the Central assistance for the cyclone victims of Kandla and Jamnagar and flood affected areas in Surat;

(b) whether the Government are considering release of Central assistance in the near future; and

(c) if so, by when?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SOMPAL): (a) to (c) It is primarily the responsibility of the State Government to undertake relief and rehabilitation measures in the wake of natural calamities from the allocation under Calamity relief Fund (CRF). An allocation of Rs. 154.83 crore was made to Gujarat during 1998-99 under CRF, which included Central share of Rs. 116.12 crore. The entire Central share was released to the State Government.

In addition to CRF, assistance is provided to the States from the National Fund for Calamity Relief (NFCR) for calamities of rare severity, after following the established procedure. Assistance from the NFCR is considered and ultimately approved by the National Calamity Relief Committee (NCRC) for release to the State.

The request of the Govt. of Gujarat for assistance from the NFCR in the wake of cyclone was considered by the NCRC, which approved an assistance of Rs. 55.25 crore to the State. This amount has been released to the State Government. The State Government's request for assistance from the NFCR in the wake of floods in Surat was considered and it was felt that the calamity could not prima-facie be considered to be one of rare severity to qualify for the assistance from the NFCR. The State was informed accordingly.

Confidence Building Measures between India and Pakistan

*343. SHRIMATI VEENA VERMA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether during the recent SAARC meet at Nuwara Eliya in Sri Lanka he had talks with his Pakistani counterpart regarding nuclear weapons related confidence building measures (CBMs);

(b) if so, the precise nature and other details of the CBMs; and

(c) the outcome thereof?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI JASWANT SINGH): (a) to (c) In my talks with the Foreign Minister of Pakistan on the sidelines of the 21st Session of the SAARC Council of Ministers at Nuwara Eliya in Sri Lanka on 19 March, 1999, it was agreed that the two countries would take concrete measures for implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding regarding confidence building measures, which was signed by the Foreign Secretaries of India and Pakistan during the visit of the Prime Minister to Pakistan in February 1999. It was also agreed that the meetings of experts for implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding would be held over the next two months. Preparatory work in this regard is currently underway and it is expected that these meetings will take place soon.

Rules Governing Resignation by Government Officers

*344. DR. JAGANNATH MISHRA: SHRI SURYABHAN PATIL VAHADANE:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether a Central Government Officer after tendering resignation can subsequently withdraw the resignation;

(b) if so, what are the details of rules, prescribed period and other guidelines/ provisions relevant in this regard;

(c) whether a number of cases of resignation and their subsequent withdrawal by officers of Andaman and Nicobar Islands and Lakshadweep were referred to the Ministry of Personnel for their expert comments; and

(d) if so, what are the details of such cases received by the Ministry during the last one year along with the action/ decision taken on these cases and reasons therefor and when the decisions on these cases were taken?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS (SHRIMATI VASUNDHRA RAJE): (a) and (b) The rules and regulations regarding withdrawal of resignation are governed by the Central Civil Services (Pension) Rules, 1972 in respect of Central government employees and corresponding rules for All India Services, Railway & Defence employees etc.

The Andaman & Nicobar Islands is a Union Territory. The employees are, therefore, governed by the Central Civil Services (Pension) Rules, 1972.

The request of an ex-government servant for withdrawal of resignation is considered in terms of Rule 26(4) & (5)